

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

HANDBOOK OF LEGAL MEDICINE—Fourth Edition—Alan R. Moritz, MD, Professor of Pathology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland; R. Crawford Morris, LLB, Partner, Arter & Hadden, Cleveland; With the assistance of Charles S. Hirsch, MD, Assistant Professor of Forensic Pathology, Case Western Reserve University. The C. V. Mosby Company, Publishers, 3301 Washington Boulevard, St. Louis, MO (63103), 1975. 286 pages, \$10.25.

This paperback manual contains a 126-page section on the physician's legal responsibilities with regard to violent crimes and injuries (forensic pathology), and a 126-page section on the physician's liabilities and responsibilities in the civil law (legal medicine). It is a brief overview covering many subjects, and is divided into 44 chapters, some only a single page in length.

The law, unlike medicine, varies among the states, and any law book written for all the states must therefore generalize legal concepts and omit much information. This handbook presents only the broadest legal concepts, but does so in a direct and concise fashion, utilizing simple examples where necessary. An unfortunate complication, however, of the concise delivery is frequent use of legal "words of art" without adequate definition. A legal word glossary at the end of the book is of little help in this regard since the need for careful definition of seemingly common words is rarely obvious.

The brevity of this handbook may also mislead physicians. For example, chapter 40 appears to state that a patient can waive his right to sue a physician for negligence. This is untrue, but is probably a misinterpretation of the oversimplified statement that the right to sue can be signed away in an agreement to a money settlement. Another example is in chapter 21 where one form of comparative negligence is described while another form is omitted. Unfortunately, the omitted form is the law in California.

The section on forensic pathology contains less legal terminology and conceptual pitfalls than the section on legal medicine, and reflects the pathology background of the two physician authors. Interest in the subjects covered in this section should therefore be the primary reason for buying the book.

The *Handbook of Legal Medicine* is a useful quick reference source on both forensic pathology and legal medicine for physicians having substantial prior knowledge of the law, but may be incomplete and misleading for others.

DAN J. TENNENHOUSE, MD, JD

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SURGICAL PATIENT—An Introduction to Clinical Surgery—Fourth Edition—J. Englebert Dunphy, MD, Professor of Surgery, University of California, San Francisco; and Thomas W. Botsford, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School, Surgeon, Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston. W. B. Saunders Company, West Washington Square, Philadelphia (19105), 1975. 414 pages, \$16.00

To beginning medical students, getting on the wards arouses intense feelings of interest and curiosity. Surgical wards in particular are susceptible to this enthusiastic invasion of clinical neophytes, as surgical patients so often harbor nice physical findings. But, because all patients are first and foremost *people* with a disease, the initial focus of this primer is psychological. Proper attention is paid to treating patients as people, to draping and talking to them in a way that they can relax, and to conducting the physical examination with "dignity, gentleness and thoughtfulness."

Naturally, the text emphasizes examination of patients with surgical disease—for details of the funduscopic examination the student is referred elsewhere. But those parts of the usual physical examination that receive short shrift in other texts are here well described: for example, the detection of peripheral vascular disease and herniae, as well as lesions of the scrotum, rectum and pelvis. As before, special attention is paid to the acute abdomen, the postoperative state and the musculoskeletal system.

Throughout, physical findings are given clinical meaning. For example, in the superb new chapter on the surgical cardiac patient, why the student should listen for the opening snap in mitral disease is explained—the snap implies a flexible valve and hence a "reparative rather than a replacement operation."

More than a guidebook on examination technique, this edition serves as a "stepping stone for the assumption of the responsibilities of a Senior Clinical Clerk." Accordingly, the last seven chapters elaborate how the approach to an acutely injured patient differs from the ordinary physical examination.

The result is a useful book that eases the transition from the basic sciences to clinical practice. As with previous editions, it distills "the stuff of which clinicians are made. Some of it is new; most of it is so old that it is in danger of being forgotten. All of it is important."

ALAN T. MARTY, MD

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CEREBROVASCULAR DISABILITY AND THE AGEING BRAIN—G. F. Adams, CBE, MD, FRCP, Honorary Professor of Geriatric Medicine, Queen's University and Physician to Wakehurst House, City Hospital, Belfast; With Chapters on Aphasia and the Management of Major Strokes, and with excerpts from papers written by the late L. J. Hurwitz, MD, FRCPE, Consultant Neurologist to the Royal Victoria, Claremont Street and City Hospitals, Belfast. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh and London, 1974. Distributed in the USA by Longman Inc, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York City (10011). 156 pages, \$16.50.

This short monograph has been designed for physicians to "encourage wider appreciation of the limitations imposed on capacity by age and disease." It briefly deals with the pathogenesis of neurological disability in ageing. It comments briefly about clinical evaluation of patients in terms of their intellectual and motor deficits. It outlines some of the common syndromes associated with stroke and dementia, and it briefly summarizes some general principles of management of patients with stroke. The book is replete with general principles but deficient in terms of dealing with specific neurological problems. It does not critically analyze the literature with regard to such complex issues as the indications for angiography, endarterectomy or anticoagulation. It has been published almost simultaneously with another British monograph, "Strokes: Natural History, Pathology and Surgical Treatment" by E. C. Hutchinson and E. J. Acheson (W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1975), with which it does not compare favorably. The physician interested in an excellent concise summary of cerebrovascular disease and its management, would be wise to consult this latter monograph, rather than "Cerebrovascular Disability and the Ageing Brain," which contains little new for generalists or specialists.

ROBERT A. FISHMAN, MD